

LESSONS FOR ESTONIA FROM THE GEORGIA-RUSSIA FIVE DAYS WAR

BY

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ABSTRACT

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The Georgia-Russia Five Days War has become a large-scale, high-profile test of the capability of the armed forces of Georgia and the country as a whole. Likewise, the August war has become sort of a test of the durability of international relations, and in my opinion has proved that small countries like Estonia and Georgia cannot fully rely on the assistance of a “great friend”. Could the same scenario be repeated in Estonia? Do we have enough security warranty from NATO and the EU? As of today, I see some potential that in the future problems very similar to this will arise, and in order to avoid them we have to identify and learn lessons from this war for Estonia. This study will briefly review the Georgian geopolitical situation and identify similarities with the situation in Estonia. In order to explain the geopolitical situation in the post Soviet space, I will assert the growing interest of Russia to become a great power. Next, the study examines and compares the defense forces of both countries. Third, it analyzes how Estonian membership in NATO and the EU can influence relations with Russia. And finally, I will try to answer the question: Does Estonia have a sufficient security warranty?

LESSONS LEARNED FOR ESTONIA ON GEORGIA-RUSSIA FIVE DAYS WAR

“...the officer who has not studied war as an applied science, and who is ignorant of modern military history, is of little use beyond the rank of Captain.”

—Field Marshal Garnet
Joseph Wolseley

War, as a phenomenon, has always been part of human history. It is almost impossible to find any period in history when somewhere some war was not underway. War is one of the most profound and regrettable forms of human interaction. However, the instrumental use of violence has proven too attractive and too useful throughout history to be discounted as an anomaly. Without any doubt, war is part of our present day international relations. “While we hope reason and negotiation can insure peace, only wars have proven to create or preserve it.”¹

Because war occupies such a significant place in our life, it is important for strategic leaders to understand general principles and the nature of war, and factors that influence that nature as well as the development and execution of strategy. As a future strategic leader I have to understand basic concepts related to war, policy and strategy, be able to examine theories on how to employ military power both strategically and at the high operational level and examine the future of war in order to be ready to address future threats and challenges in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment.

Throughout the centuries attempts have been made to explain war, many theories of war have been produced and many of them provide valuable points about the nature of the war. German theorist Carl von Clausewitz declares, “War is merely the continuation of policy by other means.”² Already on the first page of his classic *On*

War he shows his attitude towards war and reveals the essence of warfare by saying "War is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will."³ It is very difficult not to agree with him. However, all wars are different and all end-states are different, each war has its exclusive aspects, a unique set of characteristics that distinguish it. Despite the fact that there are many ready answers to the question — "what is war?" I believe that each strategic leader should be able to define their own theory of war. An important conclusion from this principle for strategic leaders to consider is that there is no universal description of the nature of the war that is applicable to all wars. It is the responsibility of the strategic leader, to the greatest possible extent, to understand the nature of the war that he is fighting right now, or will fight in the future.

Tensions between the different countries have always been a part of human life, and will obviously remain so. However, the so called Five Days War is of special interest for two reasons. First, it has become a large-scale, high-profile test of the capability of the armed forces of Georgia and the country as a whole. Secondly, the August war has become a test of the durability of international relations, and in my opinion has proved that the small countries like Estonia and Georgia cannot fully rely on assistance of a "great friend". Could the same scenario be repeated in Estonia? Do we have enough security warranty from NATO and the EU? As of today, I see some potential that in the future problems very similar to this will arise, and in order to avoid them we have to identify and learn lessons from this war.

There are a lot of similarities for Georgia and Estonia in their common quest for independence during fifty years of Soviet Union occupation. And of course it is understandable that after obtaining freedom in 1992, everyone was trying as best they

could, alone or with the help of neighbors to develop their countries rapidly and extensively. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the achievement of independence (with songs in Estonia and blood in Georgia) both countries have chosen the so-called —western” way of development. It is also very easy to understand their common dislike for their neighbor Russia, after so many years of virtual slavery.

Due to these similarities and based on a common history and relations with —big brother” Russia, I will try to answer the question; might the same scenario recur in Estonia? First, I will briefly review the Georgian geopolitical situation and find similarities with the situation in Estonia. In order to explain the geopolitical situation in the post Soviet space, I will assert the growing interest of Russia to become a great power. Next, I will examine and compare the defense forces of both countries. Third, I will analyze how Estonian membership in NATO and the EU can influence relations with Russia. Finally, I will try to answer the question: Does Estonia have a sufficient security warranty?

The Geopolitical Situation in the post Soviet space

The weakening of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and its subsequent disintegration in 1991 was accompanied by a number of ethnic conflicts in the former Soviet republics. Georgia was one of the republics where such conflicts took place. Twice, unsuccessfully, Georgia tried to force the subordination to the central government in Tbilisi of South Ossetia: in January 1991 and in June 1992 respectively. In 1992, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Georgia and South Ossetia with the help of Russia and a truce signed including provisions for monitoring by a Georgian-Ossetian-Russian peacekeeping contingent.⁴ In August 2008, a military conflict between Russia and Georgia, the so-called August War, took place after a long-

term escalation of political and military tensions. It was due to a sequence of events that led to the extreme culmination of a conventional war between the two countries. In essence, Georgia's argument that the conflict was a continuation of the 1991-1994 war can be accepted. In the intervening period, it was just the intensity of hostilities, the format, and the scope that had faded. The Five-Day War was provoked by the young, ambitious president of Georgia, Michael Saakashvili, who attempted to forcefully subordinate South Ossetia thus obtaining revenge for unsuccessful attempts to attach the rebellious territory in the beginning of the 1990's. This conflict led to Russia's intervention in an attempt to defend her interests and promote herself as a predominant force in this region. As a result, the Five-Day War became the first war between Russia and one of the former Soviet Republics which have gained independence from Russia and seek to escape from under the influence of "big brother". It is hard to overestimate the political and military consequences of this war for Georgia and all of the post-Soviet territory at the present time and in the near future.

The August War is a good example of how dangerous and uncertain "freezing" conflicts, or a non-settlement or status-quo policy, is. However, Russia successfully took advantage of the situation. Russian peacekeeping force contingents in the areas of conflict transformed smoothly, tilting the balance of power clearly in favor of Russia and the separatists. Assessing the temporal sequence of this conflict, it could be said that the conflict is not over yet because neither side is happy with the outcome and a stable peace has not been reached. That is why a full picture and understanding of the relationship between certain events is important not only in regard to the August War, but also the preceding and subsequent periods. To understand the causes of the

protracted conflict and the various interests in play, the conflict must be assessed in light of the region's major countries. Conflict and instability in neighboring countries are particularly useful for Russia to maintain its influence and interest in the post-Soviet space.⁵

Georgia's breakaway regions provoked the military conflict in Georgia and thereby compromised Tbilisi's NATO accession aspirations. The impact was of especially strong benefit in regards to another crucial aspect for Russia - Georgia had the real possibility to join NATO. Georgia took clear steps toward integration into the western world (particularly the European Union and NATO) after the 2003 Rose Revolution, and President Saakashvili came into power at the beginning of 2004.⁶ From Russia's point of view, this meant the expansion of a hostile military alliance to the southern borders of the country. NATO enlargement, a process perceived to pose a threat to Russia, was already mentioned in the 2000 military doctrine of the state.⁷ True, this document does not directly refer to NATO and when listing threats, politically correct expressions were used, e.g., "enlargement of military blocs". NATO and western society were naive to expect that Russia would quietly let Georgia join NATO, and that it would not take any steps to prevent this from occurring. Russia's opposition did not stop the accession of the Baltic States to NATO in 2004. In the case of Georgia, however the Russian leadership stated an opinion much more resolutely than in the case of the Baltic countries. On the 8th of April, 2008, the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, announced that Russia would take all the necessary steps to ensure that Georgia would not join NATO.⁸

At the political level, the green light was shown to Russia after the 2007 Bucharest NATO Summit, where the push for a Georgian Membership Action Plan failed. It was reported in Russia that there was disagreement among the NATO countries about Georgia, which Russia successfully took advantage of. The Russian leaders saw an opportunity in the country's internal problems to prevent Georgia from joining NATO. Thus, it can be said that Russia's desire for enhanced status, the political signal concerning Georgia at the NATO summit, and Georgia's unresolved internal conflicts created preconditions for Russia to demonstrate its resolve and real strength in the South Caucasus.

This unresolved conflict continues to remain a focus for instability in the whole Caucasus region, and has undermined attempts by Georgia to join the European Union and, especially, NATO. I think that in the present situation not a single NATO country will support Georgia's joining this organization due to safety reasons and their unwillingness to be involved in a conflict with Russia on the basis of Article V. The bottom line is that the Russian army is still positioned on the territory of an unrecognized country of South Ossetia, which is still considered a part of Georgia, and is the center of instability in the region.⁹

When Vladimir Putin was elected to be the Russian president he determined to rebuild the power of the Russian state and recover Russian power and influence abroad, particularly in the post-Soviet space. In the year 2000 his assigned national security policy¹⁰ brought back a new vision of world politics and a new doctrine. Moscow has set a new goal to change the USA led unipolar world back to a multipolar order, where Russia would again have a very important role to play. Russia had its own

national interests, Putin stressed in his famous speech at the Munich Security Conference in February 2007, and these interests would dictate Russian policy.¹¹

Russia has clearly shown to the whole world, by her actions towards Georgia, the desire to strengthen her position and influence in the Caucasus, and her revanchist attempts to subordinate - by threat - the former vassals to her power and to show who is the true predominant power in the region.¹²

Russia wants the West to accept, de facto if not de jure, that the post-Soviet space is part of a Russian sphere of influence and that Russia has interests in certain regions.¹³ This principle has raised concerns in Estonia because it provides the legal justification under Russian law for military intervention to the eastern part of Estonia in order to —protect” Russian minorities (as Russia already did in the Caucasus). A similar desire on the part of Russia to restore its position and influence can be seen in the Russian cyber war against Estonia. Russia’s attempt to gain Western acceptance of spheres of influence is of concern because it coincides with other developments that seem designed to enable Russia to exert pressure on the states in the post-Soviet space, even intervene militarily. Russian president Dmitri Medvedev mentioned that protecting the rights and dignity of Russian citizens wherever they may be, would be one of the most important priorities of Russian foreign policy and in August 2009 the Duma amended legislation to permit Russian forces to intervene abroad in defense of Russian citizens.¹⁴

The emphasis on maintaining political influence in the Caucasus has been the policy of the Russian Federation since the collapse of the Soviet Union, for a number of reasons. It should be taken into account that to Russia, the Caucasus is strategically

important region in the immediate vicinity of its southern borders, which directly affects Russia's security processes. In addition, after all kinds of crises following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia wanted to restore and strengthen its status as a great power. This also meant restoring and expanding its sphere of influence.

Russia indicated its intention to accept the risks involved. The highest risk associated with the military operation was political. An attack, which was clearly aimed at Georgia, even if successful, could provoke serious political consequences. Therefore, Russia needed strategic surprise to minimize the political risk. To Russia and the whole world, a military attack had to look like self-defense or defense of the Russian citizens living abroad, but in any case, not like a national political move to separate South Ossetia and Abkhazia from Georgia. The risk assessment exercise contributed to Russia's intentions in Georgia, according to which other countries' large-scale military assistance to Georgia was unlikely.¹⁵

Development of Defense Forces

As the president of Georgia, Mikhail Saakashvili tried to create a credible and modern army on the western model by increasing military spending to unprecedented levels, not only for the former Soviet Union, but on a global scale.¹⁶ It should be noted that the military policy and the reform of the Georgian armed forces were carried out purposefully and consistently, in many cases (the creation of modern bases, logistical support for personnel, the transition from conscription to a contract system) presenting a good example for rebuilding and reforming the army.

The Georgian armed forces were among the first within the post-Soviet space, (after the Baltic countries) to attempt to make the transition and upgrade equipment to the standards of western armies.¹⁷ Speaking about the funding of the Georgian armed

forces, it should be noted immediately that it depends on foreign aid, however not forgetting that the volume of this aid is not so large compared with national defense spending and valued at 300 million dollars for the period 2002 – 2008.¹⁸ In order to successfully counteract potential intervention from Russia, Georgia actively purchased heavy weaponry and was re-equipping the army in accordance with western standards. Indeed, a high level of military expenses has allowed Georgia to become one of the first among the former Soviet Republics to reach high standards for military hardware and arms. However, there is certain level of chaos in military purchases that tends to negatively influence efficient expenditure of limited means.¹⁹ Considerable expenses have been put into infrastructure development, which had positively improved the quality of training and staff support, as well as placing the Georgian army in proximity to a zone of possible operations. As a result of systematic improvement of armed forces and large expenses, by August 8, 2008, the number of land-forces reached almost 22,000.²⁰

The possibility of large-scale aggression by Russia against Georgia was always borne in mind during the development of the Georgian army. The armed forces of Georgia have always emphasized the need to conduct military operations with the help of coalition forces as well as independently, to include resisting aggression by a foreign country. Russia always played the role of possible opponent. Georgia understood that independently it was not capable of protecting itself from a possible aggressor; therefore joining NATO was viewed as a guarantee from this type of invasion, and it was reflected in the documents on the conceptual development of Georgia's armed forces.²¹

Potential attack by a stronger foreign state demands a concept of “effective reserve”, along with the creation of a professional army. In my opinion, this was the weak spot; I may even say an imperative link in the development of the Georgian army. Georgia’s huge desire to join NATO required reorganizing its army into a compact, professional, highly mobile and lightly armed force. In order to solve the problem of integration into NATO’s military structures by adapting the Georgian army to act as a part of NATO’s armed forces in various operations outside of its borders, Georgia was required to restructure its army in a direction opposite to the requirements of protection of the country from outside intrusions.²² Georgia was required to make a decision on two important problems at the same time: to join NATO and independently counteract a large external attack. The priority was given to the first problem. Despite this prioritization some attempts were made to develop an effective and numerous reserve capable of resisting the possible adversary within the limits of total defense. All these attempts have not led to any results because of lack of attention on the part of the army leadership and absence of coordination on the part of the state authorities. The program of creation of a numerous reserve like the National Guard, which is a necessary component for armies in small countries, has failed, as the events of the Five-day War have shown. Battalions of the National Guard have fairly low fighting capacity due to under trained staff, shortage of commanders, low levels of interaction between divisions, and a total absence of anti-tank weaponry.²³

Despite certain success in military staff training, the officers’ training system was expected to be much better. Desperate need for military officers has led to the creation of a short-term officers’ training program 7 to 10 months long, as well as an intensive

course (up to 9 weeks long) for lower ranking officers on the basis of sergeants having higher education. Such circumstances affect the quality of officers training, and have had a negative effect on the general combatant readiness of the army. Large numbers of "premature" officers lacking practical experience and frequent changes in command in the Georgian army led to a situation when higher positions were occupied by young officers who have very little knowledge of their position.²⁴

The political elite of Georgia strongly overestimated its capabilities. This brought the army and the country as a whole to a miserable end and set the developmental progress of Georgia decades back in time. The Five-Day War showed that Georgian Army suffers from a low level of self-organization and discipline, low moral spirit and education, as well as a shortage of trained soldiers. It is necessary to note that certain aspects of the Georgian national mentality and inadequate self-esteem contributed to these negative consequences. All the above mentioned factors persuaded the Georgian political elite to exaggerate the military potential of the army and led to a fatal decision. Finally, organized education and military staff training has fallen far behind the fast-growing number of armed forces. However, it is important to note that the training and the actions of artillery divisions were at their best, which confirms the importance of military staff training as a whole. Training of artillery professionals is done on the basis of the former Soviet military college; the sole successfully reformed educational institution for local armed forces preparation.

The military system of Georgia has demonstrated extremely weak organization, low level of command, and total lack of preparedness for any large conflict with a better-equipped enemy: the so-called system of "total defense" has not worked out.

Comparing the Estonian Defense Forces (EDF) with the defense forces of Georgia, we can confidently see that they are very similar in composition and size, use of new technologies, training of personnel and the experience of participating in international operations. Certainly there are significant differences, such as the number of tanks, armored vehicles and artillery, not to mention aircrafts, which are completely absent in Estonia. Estonia has chosen the development of the Army based on the mobilization system but Georgia relies on a professional army. Estonia's defense capability is based first of all on total defense principles where our own defense capability is combined with the support of the international community. For the foreseeable future Estonia will maintain a reserve component. In accordance with the latest version of the National Defense Development Plan 2009 – 2018 EDF is still built on the reserve-based principle. In time of peace a relatively small active force element, up to 5,000 strong, performs peacetime tasks and missions. These include, but are not limited to, all ongoing deployments in NATO and coalition military operations, initial military training of conscripts, reserve refresher training, and maintenance of required readiness levels. In time of crisis or war reservists will be called up to establish wartime forces of up to 25,000 strong.²⁵ I cannot accept that for Estonia this is enough to divert the threat from the country, and that the army alone is a sufficient deterrent to potential aggressors. As a result, I can confidently say that in addition to military forces Estonia requires allies, and a very well-balanced foreign policy.

The security warranty for Estonia based upon membership in NATO and the EU

In the long term of development, both countries have chosen democratic reforms, and political strategies based on close relationships with western countries and especially with the USA. Georgia and Estonia have been devoted partners with the USA

since 1992, and have supported all U.S. initiatives, sometimes at the expense of their own people (as in Iraq and Afghanistan)²⁶. What happened, what went wrong, why was this war started? Was it really only the desire of Russia to show to the world its growing strength and willingness to use its economic and military forces to pursue a restoration of its power, and at the same time to test the army's fighting ability? Maybe it was a desire to test the reaction of the world; whether Europe, dependent upon Russian gas and oil, would protect the young Georgian democracy. Or maybe Russia wanted to test its relationship with the U.S., which had only just begun to improve, and show the world that the big countries will always cooperate with each other, sacrificing weaker partners. Is Georgia a "failed state" or just an object of great power competition between the USA and Russia?²⁷ I think that all of these reasons played a cruel joke on Georgia, for which its invasion of South Ossetia supplied a pretext. According to Erik Männik, professor at the Estonian Military Academy: —Georgia's decision to use military force against South Ossetia meant the abandonment of what is for a small nation a major principle of security policy- the leading role of foreign policy in security".²⁸

How the West and the U.S. responded to this invasion should be cause for alert not only to Estonia, where the internal situation is very poor, but also other countries emerging from under the influence of Russia after the Soviet Union collapsed.²⁹

Russia had hoped the attacks on Georgia would induce the Baltic States to consider: who is next? Russian leaders want to see the Baltic States stiffen, but such "feelings" must be avoided. Should that mean that if Estonia gets into the same situation she should not expect help from anyone? Russia's aggression is conceivable only if the Russian leaders think that their actions will not have long-term repercussions

on the international scene. Estonia itself is only able to avert the threat of attacks with the help of partners, and Estonia should continue its lobbying efforts in the international arena. The Russia – Georgia war proved that small countries cannot prevent aggression alone. Estonia has managed to insulate themselves from attacks from its eastern neighbor by entry into various Western organizations. As a full member of NATO since 2004, Estonia meets all its commitments as an equal partner for other countries. Even the economic crisis did not affect its commitments to spend 1.9 percent of GDP for defense purposes.³⁰

NATO membership does not automatically protect against attack by any aggressor, but it gives confidence for future development and hope that your partners will come to help you in a tough time. Nonetheless, I am very surprised by the slow reaction of the EU to this conflict, which allowed Russia to conduct a quick and successful operation. In my opinion, this was not just a war against Georgia but a war against the successful steps towards democracy in Georgia, and against NATO's eastward expansion, and as a result it is part of Russia's war against the West. The world economic crisis has worsened the situation of Georgia's economy, as well as all the western countries. Others showed caution in assisting Georgia because they were afraid to be involved in the military conflict and worsen their relations with Russia while depending on Russia's energy resources.³¹

Estonia has conducted successful integration into international organizations such as the EU and NATO, and continues to conduct a successful foreign policy.³² Despite our integration into the EU and NATO, Estonia is still heavily dependent on Russia for energy, especially natural gas.³³ Furthermore, despite the fact that some

people in Russia are ready to go to war in order to restore the empire, Russia has serious obligations to the EU, and as a member of the OSCE organization should not provoke international society once more in the near future. However, only Russia can answer the question: Would Russia venture another attack against a NATO member?

The concerns about Russia are reinforced by what Estonia see as NATO's increasing weakness. Due to the US and NATO's failure to respond with anything more than words in the Georgian crisis in August 2008 the Estonia people and politicians are concerned whether in a future crisis NATO would be willing and able to come to our defense.³⁴ The Russian invasion of Georgia underscored the dangers of extending an Article V security guarantee to countries in the post-Soviet space.³⁵ None of the NATO members (including the U.S.) was ready to provide military support to Georgia and risk a military conflict with Russia. A failure by the alliance to carry out an Article V security commitment to a member under attack would have a devastating impact on the alliance's credibility and brings us back to the question: What is NATO's Mission?³⁶ Edward Lucas warns in his book *The New Cold War* that if the West does not begin in the near future to support those countries which are threatened by Russia, all the cards will be given to Russia and it will begin to dictate the terms of a new Cold War³⁷.

Areas of strategic concentration for Estonia in the future

If one's neighbor poses a military threat, the fact must be treated seriously and one should prepare to defend oneself, including asking the international community to prevent aggression. Unfortunately, the international community did not follow the golden rule as nobody simply believed that in 2008, a conventional war of a sovereign country against another country could break out. During the period preceding the August War

when all indicators showed that Russia was preparing for military aggression against Georgia, the country was, in fact, abandoned.

The August War justified yet more aggressive changes in Russia's military doctrine.³⁸ To this point, Russia's doctrine only approved use of nuclear weapons in cases of deterrence and retaliation, i.e., should Russia suffer a nuclear or a large-scale conventional attack. Now, the nuclear use threshold has been lowered, providing an opportunity to proactively use any nuclear weapon to prevent aggression against the country and its allies. Given that Russia has kept a number of ethnic conflicts in the neighboring countries alive, the likelihood of the use of nuclear weapons has substantially increased. This is a very clear message to the West not to interfere into Russia's foreign and security policy in its so-called areas of interest. Here, there is a risk that the West may become more cautious in resolving crises in the vicinity of Russia.

A NATO military operation cannot be initiated without prior combat readiness and requirements to go through several steps to minimize the loss of NATO troops and to ensure the success of a military campaign. The Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (RUAF) do not have such concerns. If the Russian forces order a military operation to start soon, they do start it immediately, regardless of the real readiness to do so. Even if such hurry leads to significant losses in human life the military force is compensated by a second echelon, which is transferred from one area to another. With such a pragmatic approach to the use of armed forces Russia ensures extremely rapid military response.³⁹

Although the United States had no formal treaty commitment to defend Georgia, the Russian military action demonstrated that the countries in the post-Soviet space

could not count on the United States or NATO to protect them. Just as the US was not willing to risk a war with the Soviet Union when it invaded Hungary in 1956, Washington was not prepared to risk a military confrontation with Moscow over Georgia. The United States will need to strike a fine balance between resetting relations with Russia while at the same time providing reassurance to its East European allies that their interests will not be neglected as the dialogue with Russia proceeds.⁴⁰

The invasion was thus a sharp reminder that admitting new members from the post-Soviet area entailed serious risks and that NATO could be called upon to militarily defend these potential new members. The overall impact of the invasion was to force the US and its allies to rethink the process of further enlargement of NATO into these countries. While the door to Georgian membership remains open, as a practical matter further enlargement of the alliance has been put on hold for the foreseeable future.

From the Russian point of view, the invasion can be seen as success and it demonstrated Russian's resolve to defend its interests in the post-Soviet space. It highlighted American powerlessness in the face of determined Russian readiness to defend those interests. It tarnished Saakashvili's image, both at home and in Europe, and it slowed the process of NATO enlargement in the post-Soviet area, possibly derailing it permanently.

Conclusion

As a result of the collapse of Soviet Union the former communist states of Eastern Europe have been integrated into Euro-Atlantic institutions and today enjoy a degree of economic prosperity, political stability, and external security that exceeds anything most of them have ever experienced in their histories. While many of them still face important economic and political challenges, their future are reasonably secure.

Estonia has now an excellent opportunity for policy research and reconsideration of its relationship with partners and priorities. We must ourselves be strong, closely monitor our foreign policy and not give reason for provocation, but it is best to remove the cause (relations between Estonians and Russians in Estonia dramatically worsened after the displacement of the monument to the Soviet victory in the World War II) which may give rise to a Russia attack on Estonia in order to protect the ethnic Russian population.

Before the initiation of any military or other hostile action against a small neighboring country, Russia attempts to undermine its reputation as well as break the consensus of the NATO member states in relation to the small country's assistance. Russia achieved noticeable success in narrowing Georgia's circle of friends, which proved to be a very dangerous trend in the development of Georgia as well as NATO and EU interests in the Caucasus as a whole. This is why it's important for a small country to establish military and strategic capability by carrying out information and psychological campaigns operations along with suitably integrated military operations. The intent of this preparation is to ensure adequate protection. The military and strategic lessons of the August War point out three main conclusions that are of strategic importance to Georgia's security and defense. The same lessons also apply to Estonian military defense.

We cannot win a battle with an enemy that has a numerical superiority in manpower and advantage in technology, but it does not mean that we should wait and surrender at the mercy of the aggressor. We must be smarter and use our best assets, use an indirect approach and use our strong side against the weaker side of the enemy.

—Ginto emptiness, strike voids, bypass what he defends, and hit him where he does not expect you.”⁴¹ . This mixture of theories with indirect-approach theory as a cornerstone is very much driven from the perspective of the small state with limited amount of resources. We have to be ready fight our ~~holy~~” war. In my opinion, a holy war for Estonia it is a total war, and that means mobilization of all resources and people in order to protect our freedom and preserve the nation. In a total war the enemy has to break the people’s will.

No small country can afford the entire potential of the country being involved in national defense. Military defense based on the territorial defense principle is the approach which best allows small countries to create a broad-based national defense system, involving all relevant segments of the society and the country's resources. The best deterrence is to develop a believable and capable defense force that shows our will to fight and would encourage a potential aggressor to think twice before starting any action against Estonia.

I derive several key findings from an analysis of this conflict: First, I have a very controversial opinion about Georgia, which on the one hand is attempting to continue democratic development but on the other hand attempted to solve its internal problems by military force. Second, there are still people in Russia who are ready to go to war to restore the empire. Third, Estonia should continue the orderly development of its defense forces.

Despite the fact that only Russia can answer the question: Would Russia venture to attack a NATO member, I think that in the near future there is no threat from Russia to Estonia, because Estonia had conducted successful integration into international

organizations such as the EU and NATO, and continues to conduct a successful foreign policy. Furthermore, even taking into account that some people in Russia are ready to go to war in order to restore the empire, Russia has serious obligations to the EU and as a member of the OSCE organization it is not likely that it will provoke international society once more in the near future.

Endnotes

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⁵ Edward Lucas "New Cold War" p 131

⁶ Ibid., 140

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²⁰ Vjacheslav Tseluiko, Tanki Avgusta, pp 11-42.

²¹ Strategic Defence Review. MOD of Georgia, Tbilisi, 2007 pp 66-67.

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²⁴ Risto Lumi, Russia and Georgia War, Military Conclusions p 17.

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²⁷ Jakub Grygiel, Vacuum Wars, The Coming Competition over Failed States.

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²⁹ Edward Lucas "New Cold War" p 129

³⁰ Budget of MoD of Estonia
<http://mod.gov.ee/et/otsing?keyword=eelarve&x=37&y=13&intro=1&ok=1> (accessed 15 December 2010).

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